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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the image of the "Ibasyo" or psychologically comfortable space of children not attending school. It suggests that psychological healthiness is dependent upon whether or not an individual has his or her individual space. The images of psychologically comfortable space through the "circle, triangle, and square" technique are presented. The paper describes a study of this technique administered to psycho-neurotic type (PNT) and school truancy type (STT) adolescents. It was found that STT adolescents felt no "Ibasyo" at school. Most of the PNT adolescents relaxed in the home but did not want to spend time alone. The PNT adolescents tended to have self-consciousness which sometimes became too much to cope with others, while the STT adolescents had poor self-consciousness so that when asked by others to do things they knew to be wrong, they could not refuse. These findings are consistent with Kitayama (1993): the "I" can be interchangeably used for "Ibasyo." The paper suggests art therapy is helpful for these adolescents along with drawing of the circle or square on a piece of paper to help them feel their comfortable space. (JDM)

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A Study on an Image of the "Ibasyo" or Psychologically Comfortable Space for the Children of Non-attendant at School through the ○△□ Technique

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Yasuko Nakamura is a Ph.D. candidate in clinical psychology at the Osaka City University in Japan. She has been working at the Osaka City Child Guidance Clinic as a clinical psychologist for four years. She is engaged in consultation and psychotherapy for the children of non-attendant at school and delinquent children along with routine work in the clinic.

INTRODUCTION

In this paper, the author discusses the image of the "Ibasyo" or psychologically comfortable space of non-attendant at school, whom the author met at the Osaka City Child Guidance Clinic. In a high technological age, children who cannot adjust to school are increasing in Japan (Inamura, 1994). Generally, children spend time with the family in the house while they play with friends and study with teachers at school. However, those who are non-attendant at school are likely to have no "Ibasyo" or psychologically comfortable space whether it is in a house or at school. So that they have no where they can make themselves comfortable. The "Ibasyo" or psychologically comfortable space is a space where an individual feels comfortable, feels at ease or feels at home, which concept is considered as an important index for therapeutic environment for the psychotics through our studies (Nakamura, 1992, Matusita, 1993). In other words, whether or not an individual has his or her "Ibasyo" depends on psychological healthiness. The author has been interested in finding more elaborated images of their psychologically comfortable space through the ○△□ technique. The ○△□(circle, triangle, and square) technique has been developed as a sort of projective technique by the author since 1992.

INSTRUCTION

The ○△□ technique is as follows; First, a white letter sized-paper(7.2 × 10.1 inch) without any drawing is given to each child and asked to locate wherever they feel like they want to mark a dot. Second, the same sized-paper with ○ is shown and the child is, this time, requested to locate the dot where he or she feels like to put it. Also △, and then □, with the same procedure is administered to the child. Then, the child is asked why he or she locates the dot as it is. Third, he or she is asked to answer five questions. (1) Are you comfortable with what you have located your dot? (2) Is your dot stable? (3) Is your dot explicitly visible? (4) Is your dot dynamic enough to be alive? (5) Are you satisfied with your dot? Finally, the child chooses the most liked one and the most disliked one from among four kinds of papers (white paper, ○, △, and □). And then, the child chooses the paper

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suitable for the association of the following four kinds of scenes respectively; One is "at school". Another is "in the house". Other is "with the friend". Yet another is "alone".

METHODS

The ○△□ technique was administered by the author to 14 children. The instruction of the technique as stated above was given individually at the test room. There were 5 boys and 9 girls, aged ranging from 12 years old to 14 years old. The children were divided into two types; psycho-neurotic type (PNT) and school truancy type (STT). The former is an unsociable type that they are kept in the house and with one or two psychosomatic symptoms such as a stomachache or a headache. The latter is an antisocial type that they sometimes run away from home and play with friends all night. They were shown in the Table 1. The results were analysed both statistically and individually.

Table 1. Subjects (N=14)

	sex	
	boys	girls
Psycho-neurotic type (PNT)(N= 9)	2	7
School Truancy type (STT) (N= 5)	3	2
Total	5	9

RESULTS

The preference of paper

The paper with ○ was chosen as the paper most liked (50%). The white paper, △, and □ were almost equally chosen as the paper most disliked (28.6% respectively). These were shown in Fig. 1 .

The scenes

The white paper and △ were chosen as scenes mostly with "at school" (41.7% respectively). As for "in the house", ○ and □ were chosen most (33.3% respectively). As for "with friends", ○ was chosen most (36.4%). As for "alone", the white paper was chosen most (62.5%). These were shown in Fig. 2 .

The relationship between the preference of paper and the scenes

It was examined the relationship between the preference of paper and the scenes. These were shown in Figure 3 .

First, there were 12.5% in PNT (N=8) who chose the scene of "at school" as the paper they preferred as "the like", while there was 0% in STT (N=4). Then, there

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were more than the half children of both PNT and STT who chose the scene of "at school" as the paper they preferred as "the dislike" (50% respectively).

Second, there were 57.1% in PNT (N=7) who chose the scene of "in the house" as the paper they preferred as "the like", while there were 20% in STT (N=5). Then, there was 0% in PNT who chose the scene of "in the house" as the paper they preferred as "the dislike", while there were 40% in STT. It was found that the image of the house was related to a good image for PNT, and a bad image for STT.

Third, there were 50% in PNT (N=6) who chose the scene of "with friend" as the preferred as "the like", while there were 40% in STT (N=5). Then, there was no child who chose the scene of "with friend" as the paper they preferred as "the dislike" in PNT, while in STT chose the same paper (20%).

Finally, there were 20% in PNT (N=5) who chose the scene of "alone" as the paper they preferred as "the like", while there were 25% in STT (N=4). And, there were more than the half children of PNT who chose the paper of "alone" as the paper they preferred as "the dislike" (60%), while there were fewer children of STT who chose the same (25%). In other words, the PNT children seemed to hate becoming to be alone, and the STT children didn't seemed to have so much resistance becoming to be alone.

DISCUSSION

In this study, it was found that the children of non-attendant at school felt no "Ibasyo" at school, that is, they could not feel comfortably at school, although they wanted to go to school, because most of them chose their image of the scene in which they were at school but they also chose the same scene as the one they disliked. Most of the children of psycho-neurotic type relaxed comparatively in the house and they did not want to spend time alone. So he or she wanted to spend time with the friend. On the other hand, the school truancy type did not relax even in the house. They were all right to spend time alone. However, he or she seemed to have fun with the friend.

In general, neither the former nor the latter acquires the capacity to be alone after all. In the children of psycho-neurotic type, the reason why they want to be with the friend is that he or she has not acquired the capacity to be alone. Then, in the children of school truancy type, the reason that they don't care much to be alone is that they have not been acquired the capacity to be alone enough, but they have been deprived from the parent-child relationship since the early childhood. So it can be said that they want to be with the friend, too.

For instance, Winnicott (1958) described that the capacity to be alone is developed based on the premise that he or she has had some experiences which enabled them to feel all right to become alone. If the child has not experienced it good enough, he or she can not develop the capacity. For instance, those who can become interested in playing, they are the ones who can be themselves and independent while playing. Whereas those who can not play by themselves are the

ones who are not psychologically independent.

Most psycho-neurotic type children are poor in keeping for a psychologically moderate distance from others. For instance, a girl of the psycho-neurotic type and a non-attendant at school screamed in a therapy session as follows; "When I said something to my friend, she said she was psychologically hurt. Since then, I have made it a rule to myself that I won't say anything to other." and "This attitude gradually lead me to the point where I became less and less interested in expressing my feelings, and what was worse was I tended to loose what I was feeling or experiencing. I have lost my opinion. I have no sense on "Ibasyo". I am not "I". After all, I don't myself." Thus, the psycho-neurotic type children are not good at measuring as to how for or near they can come to others in terms of psychological distance in interpersonal relationships.

On the other hand, the school truancy type children will say that "I am relived when I am with somebody. So even when I am invited to smoke or to shoplift, I can not refuse it, although I know it is not a good thing.

It can be said that the psycho-neurotic type children tended to have self-consciousness which sometimes becomes too much to cope with others, while the school truancy type children are somewhat opposite is that they have poor self-consciousness so that when asked by others they can not refuse it.

These speculation along with the findings from the present study are consistent with was described by a Japanese psychiatrist, Kitayama (1993). He says that "I" can be interchangeably used for "Ibasyo".

Finally, to help the children have their own "Ibasyo", any art therapy was helpful according to my experience. Also, a drawing of the ○ or □ in a paper was helpful to let the children feel at ease and feel their "Ibasyo" or a psychologically comfortable space.

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Fig. 1 The preference of paper

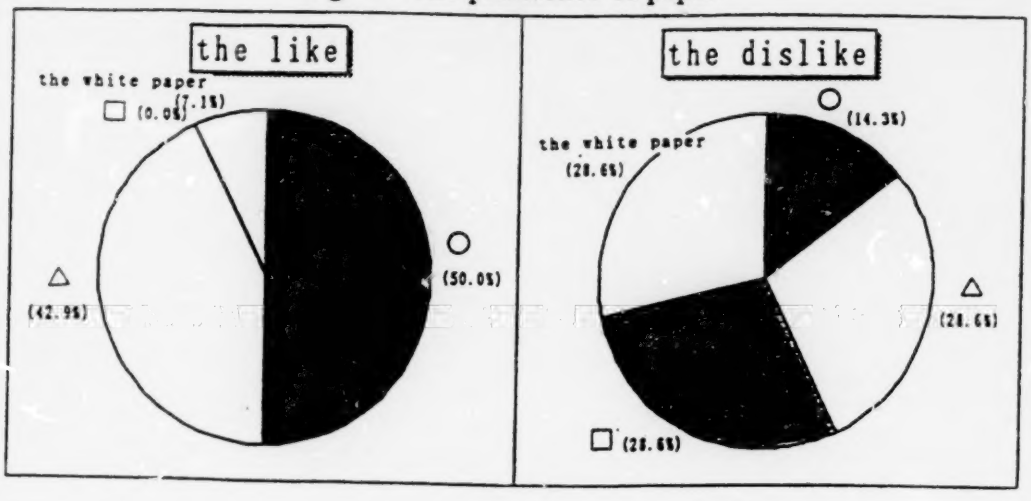

Fig. 2 The scenes

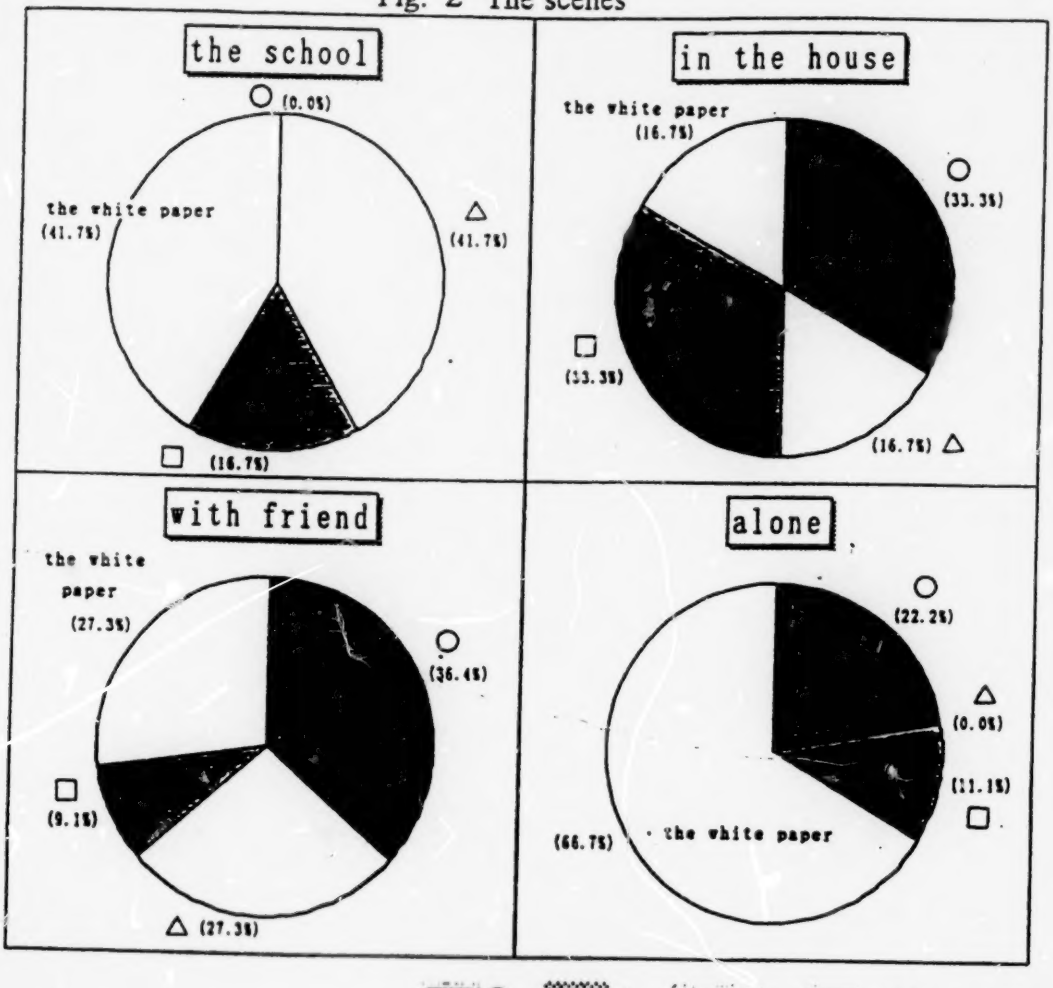

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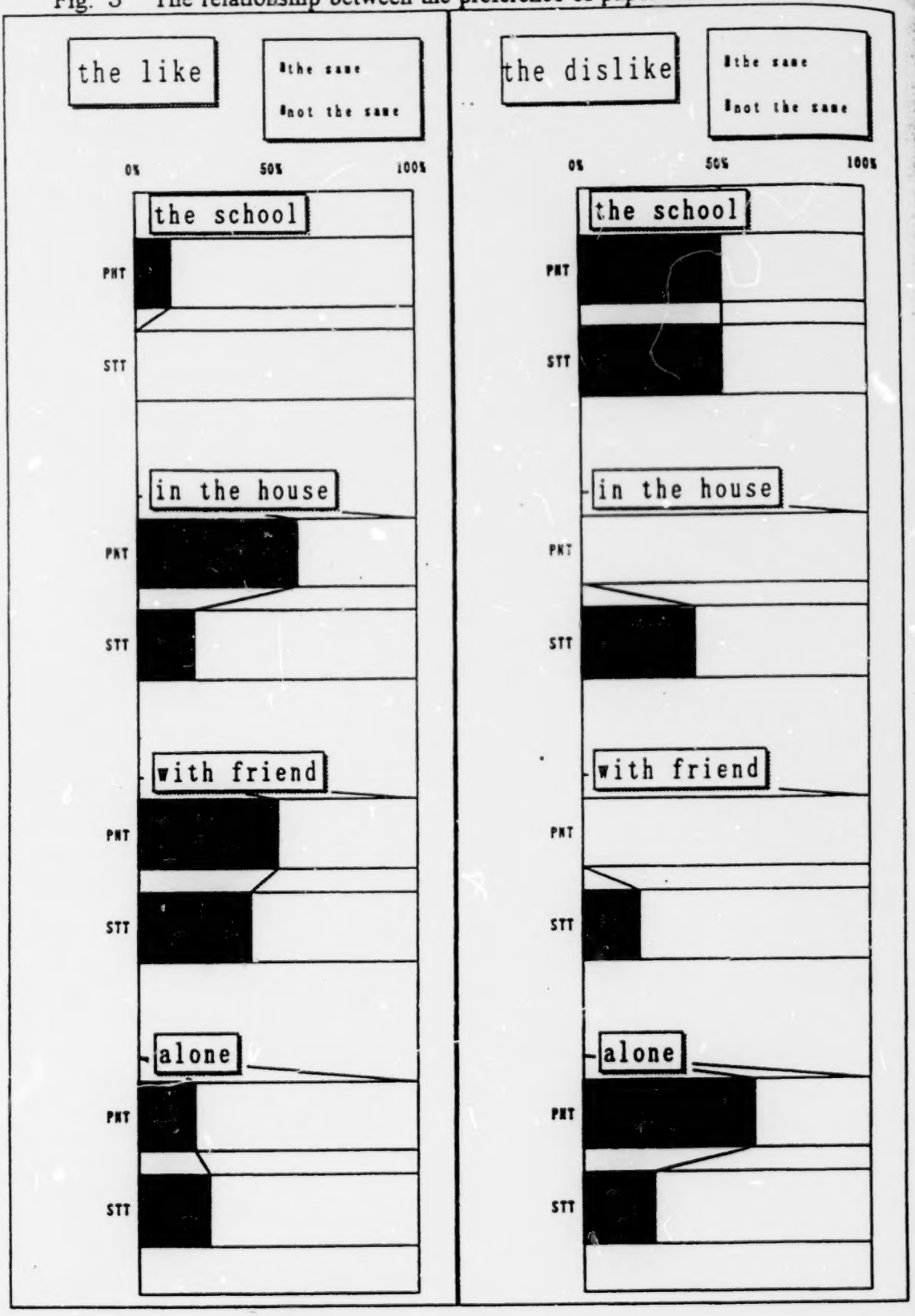
Fig. 3 The relationship between the preference of paper and the scenes



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